AKIRA

37™

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EPIC COMICS® $6.95 • $9.75 CAN • VOL 1, NO 37

Published monthly by EPIC COMICS®
in collaboration with
Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo
Office of Publication:
387 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

AKIRA™ Vol 1, No. 37
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AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 37

EVOLUTION

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

2030. The world hovers on the brink of World War IV. **Kaneda,** onetime leader of a delinquent gang, is caught up in the aftermath of a power struggle between a Japanese military research organization – led by a man known as the **Colonel** – and a resistance group whose members included **Kay, Ryu,** and a formidable woman named **Chiyoko.**

The Colonel had a number of psychic children under his control. Each one was identified by a number marked on the hand. Among them were **Kiyoko** and **Masaru** – Numbers 25 and 27. The blind **Lady Miyako** – Number 19 – now heads a great religious cult. Number 41 is **Tetsuo,** who lost his left arm to a laser blast from the Colonel's military satellite SOL, and has used cybernetics and telekinesis to fabricate a prosthetic replacement. **Tetsuo** was Kaneda's dearest friend until he used his burgeoning powers to slaughter other members of their gang. Now, **Kaneda** is out for revenge.

Most powerful of all the children is Number 28 – **Akira,** a docile and enigmatic boy who was placed in cryogenic sleep almost forty years ago after he started the Third World War with a mental blast. **Akira** was recently reawakened by **Tetsuo,** and again he devastated the reconstructed city of Neo-Tokyo. Now Japan exists in a state of emergency. The force of the army and the resistance are scattered and the military's formidable caretaker robots patrol the streets.

In the western part of Neo-Tokyo, the **Great Tokyo Empire** is formed – a monarchy with **Akira** on the throne and **Tetsuo** as his prime minister. Together the pair use their powers, organizing their subjects into fighting units to defend their land. Their headquarters is Neo-Tokyo's **Olympic Stadium.** To the east, **Lady Miyako** welcomes refugees to her shrine. In this, she is aided by **Kiyoko, Masaru,** and a number of loyal psychic monks.

The **Empire** is infiltrated by teams of spies and commando units from the outside world, equipped with biochemical armaments which take a tremendous toll on Tetsuo's forces.

A fleet of foreign ships waits in Tokyo Bay, poised for action. Aboard an American naval vessel, an international conclave of scientists and one Tibetan monk study the **Akira** phenomenon – which they've codenamed **Juvenile A.** One of the scientists – **Stanley Simmons** – goes ashore to implement a secret plan. The research team is certain that using military force against **Akira** and **Tetsuo** can only lead to disaster. When the fleet sends fighter planes against **Tetsuo,** he uses a satellite to destroy their flag-

ship, forcing the surviving military personnel and scientists to flee.

Meanwhile, **Kay** joins Miyako's forces in battle against **Tetsuo. Kay** is a powerful medium, through whom the others can project their powers as one.

Kaneda teams up with **Kai** and **Joker** – a friend and rival from his gang days. Using salvaged weapons the trio lead a force of refugees and street rats to help **Kay** in her battle with **Tetsuo**. As they fight, **Akira** looks placidly on, drawn by the similarity of Tetsuo's powers to his own.

Tetsuo is griefstricken over the death of his gentle girlfriend, **Kaori.** He carries her body to the underground chamber where **Akira** once slept. **Akira** follows and is joined by **Kaneda, Joker, Chiyoko** and **Ryu.** They prepare to fight in the bowels of the earth, where many of their comrades died.

Tetsuo's powers have grown erratic. His body frequently bloats and expands, engulfing those who venture too close. For a moment, it seems that contact with **Kaneda** has restored Tetsuo's humanity. Then, Tetsuo's power comes surging back and **Kaneda** is drawn into his monstrous form, apparently consumed. As the battle rages, **Akira** becomes more alert. Terrified at what might occur if **Akira** awakens fully, **Ryu** panics. He draws a gun and shoots **Akira,** setting the boy's power free.

Seeking a new power source for himself, **Tetsuo** flies to Lady Miyako's shrine. **Kay** follows in hot pursuit. **Lady Miyako** instructs **Kiyoko** and **Masaru** to look after **Akira,** and the pair teleport away to help their friend. **Lady Miyako,** her followers, and **Kay** prepare to make a final stand against **Tetsuo.**

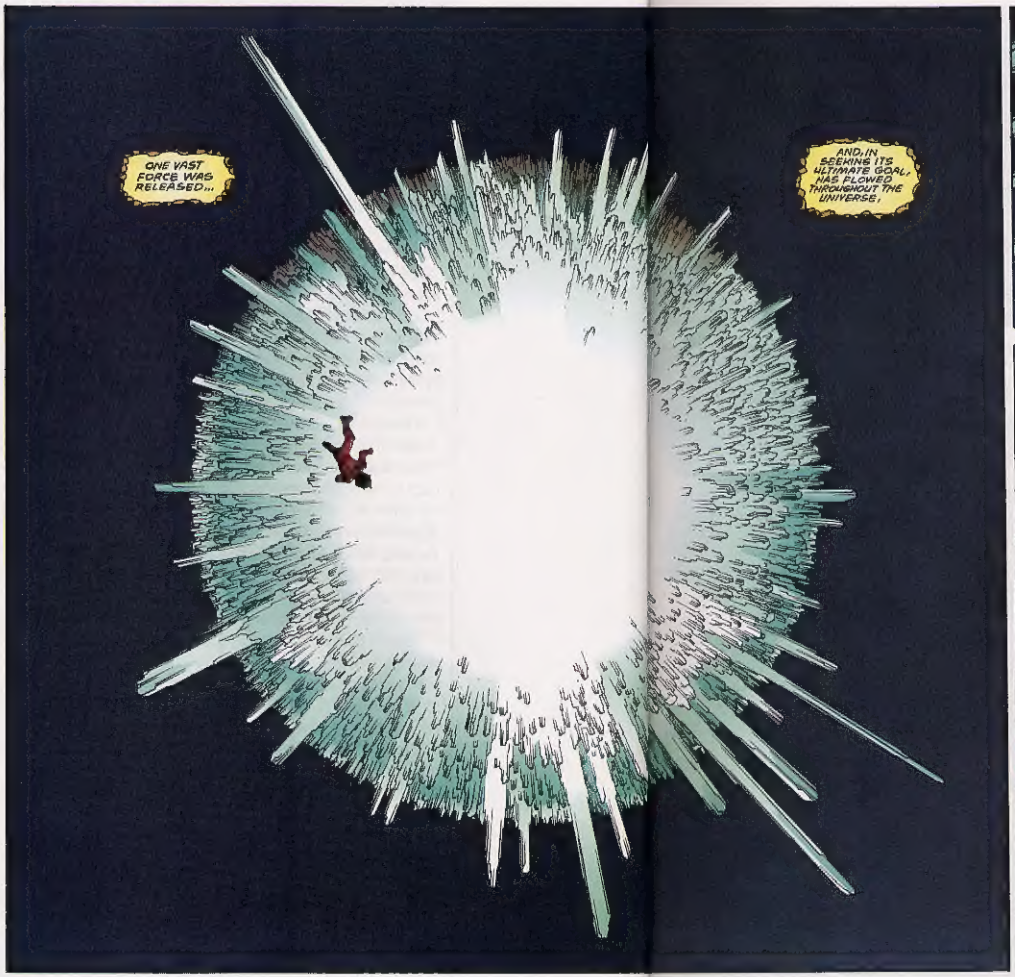
Kiyoko and **Masaru** meet **Akira** on the psychic plane. They are joined by the spirits of all the gifted children who have died before.

Telling **Kay** that the resolution depends on her, **Lady Miyako** heroically draws **Tetsuo** to herself and is killed. As she dies, she, too, is drawn to the spirit plane, where the souls of friends who have gone before await.

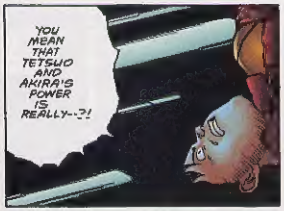
Kay is guided in battle by her late mentor's commands, and is able to break through to **Tetsuo.** His concentration interrupted, he is vulnerable, and is himself consumed by the force of Akira's mind.

Trapped within Tetsuo's soul, **Kaneda** experiences a fractured, kaleidoscopic journey through his late friend's life and hardships. He shares with **Tetsuo** both the good memories and the bad.

Kaneda is contacted by Lady Miyako's spirit, and is stunned by what she tells him. Although **Tetsuo** and **Akira** were created in laboratories, they, along with all the catastrophe they bring, are a vital part of mankind's evolution.

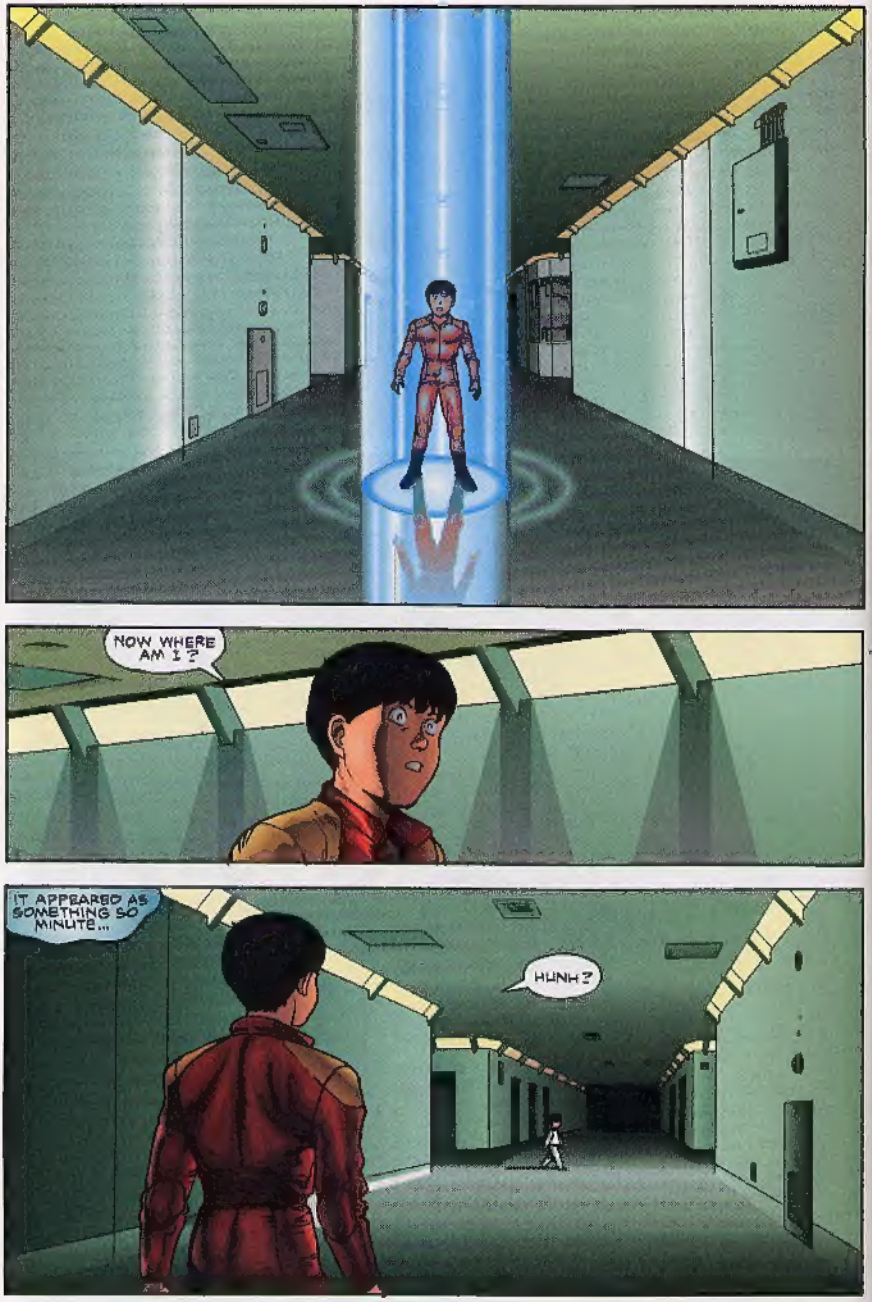

ONE VAST FORCE WAS RELEASED...
AND, IN SEEKING ITS ULTIMATE GOAL, HAS FLOWED THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE!

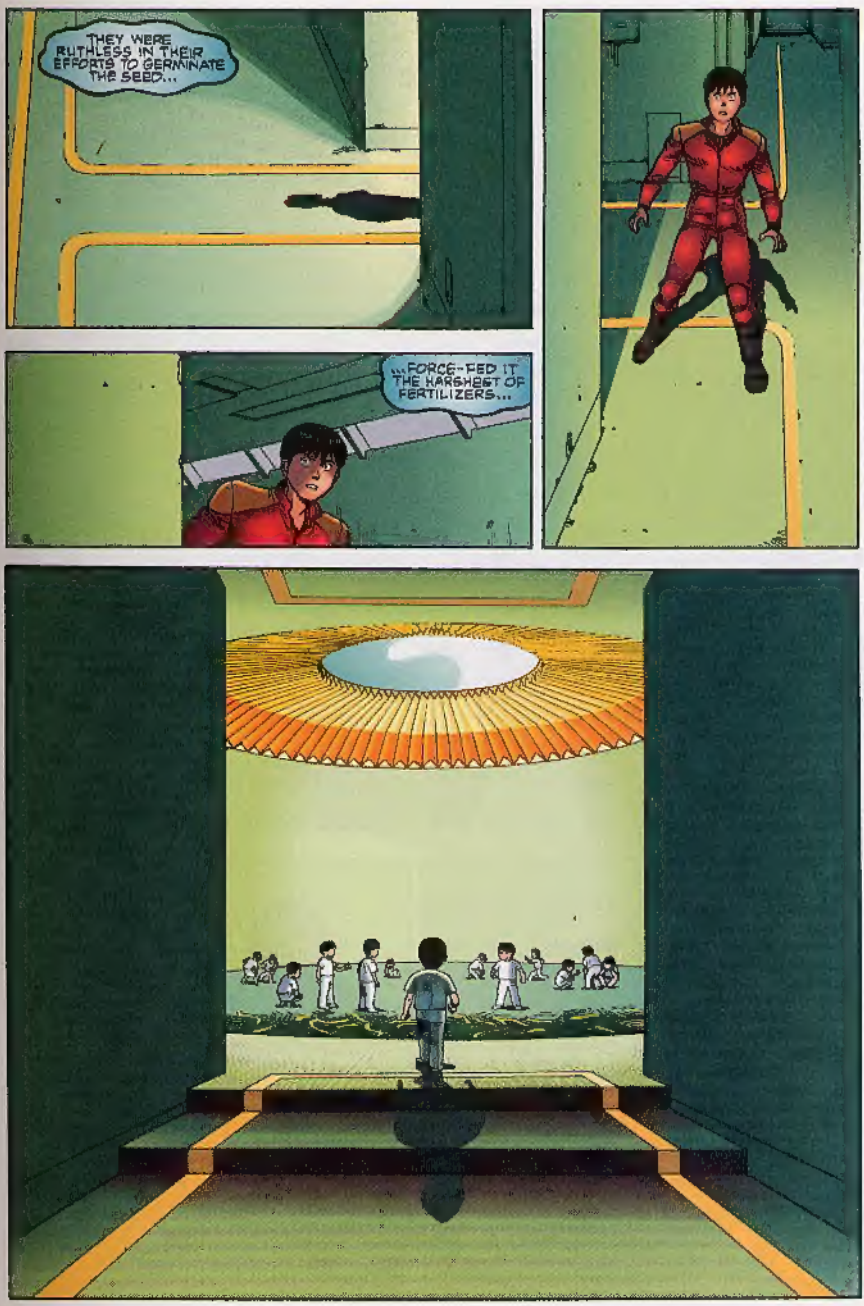
THE POWER HAS DISSIPATED AND SPREAD TO MANY OUTLETS... ITS SEEDS LYING DORMANT IN THEIR INDIVIDUAL MEMORIES.


YOU MEAN THAT TETSUO AND AKIRA'S POWER IS REALLY--?!

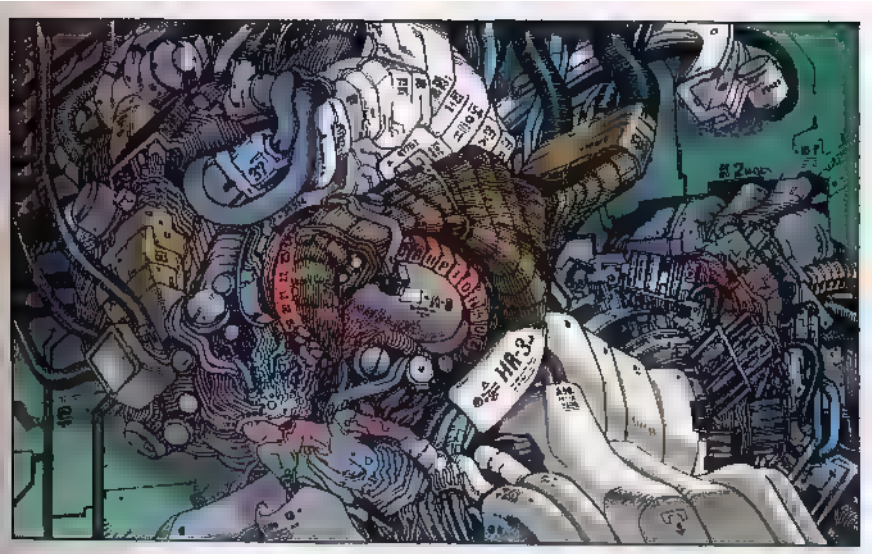
BUT THEN WHY IS IT ALWAYS SO DESTRUCTIVE?

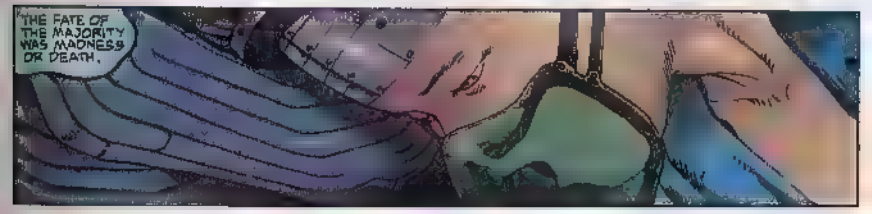
THE HARDSHIPS AKIRA GENERATED MAY BE MEANT TO PROMOTE HUMANITY'S EVOLUTION...
WHAT THE HELL FOR?! EVEN EVOLUTION IS A PROGRAMMED FLOW, ISN'T IT?!
CAN YOU DOUBT THE ABILITY OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT TO CHOOSE THE PATH OUR DEVELOPMENT WILL FOLLOW?
YOU MEAN THE HUMAN RACE WANTS TO EVOLVE INTO SOMETHING DIFFERENT?
THE FRUITS BEING DOWN HERE...
...WILL BE HARVESTED BY YOUR CHILDREN.
THAT'S TOTAL BULLSHIT! YOU CAN'T TELL ME THAT TETSUO AND THOSE SHRIVELLED WHITE MUTANT KIDS FROM THE LAB ARE SOMETHING THE HUMAN RACE WANTS TO BE!


NOW WHERE AM I?
IT APPEARED AS SOMETHING SO MINUTE...
HUNH?

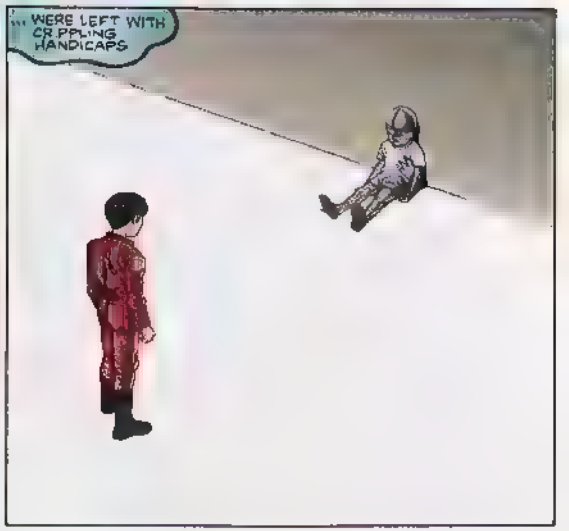

THEY WERE RUTHLESS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO GERMINATE THE SEED...
...FORCE-FED IT THE HARSHEST OF FERTILIZERS...

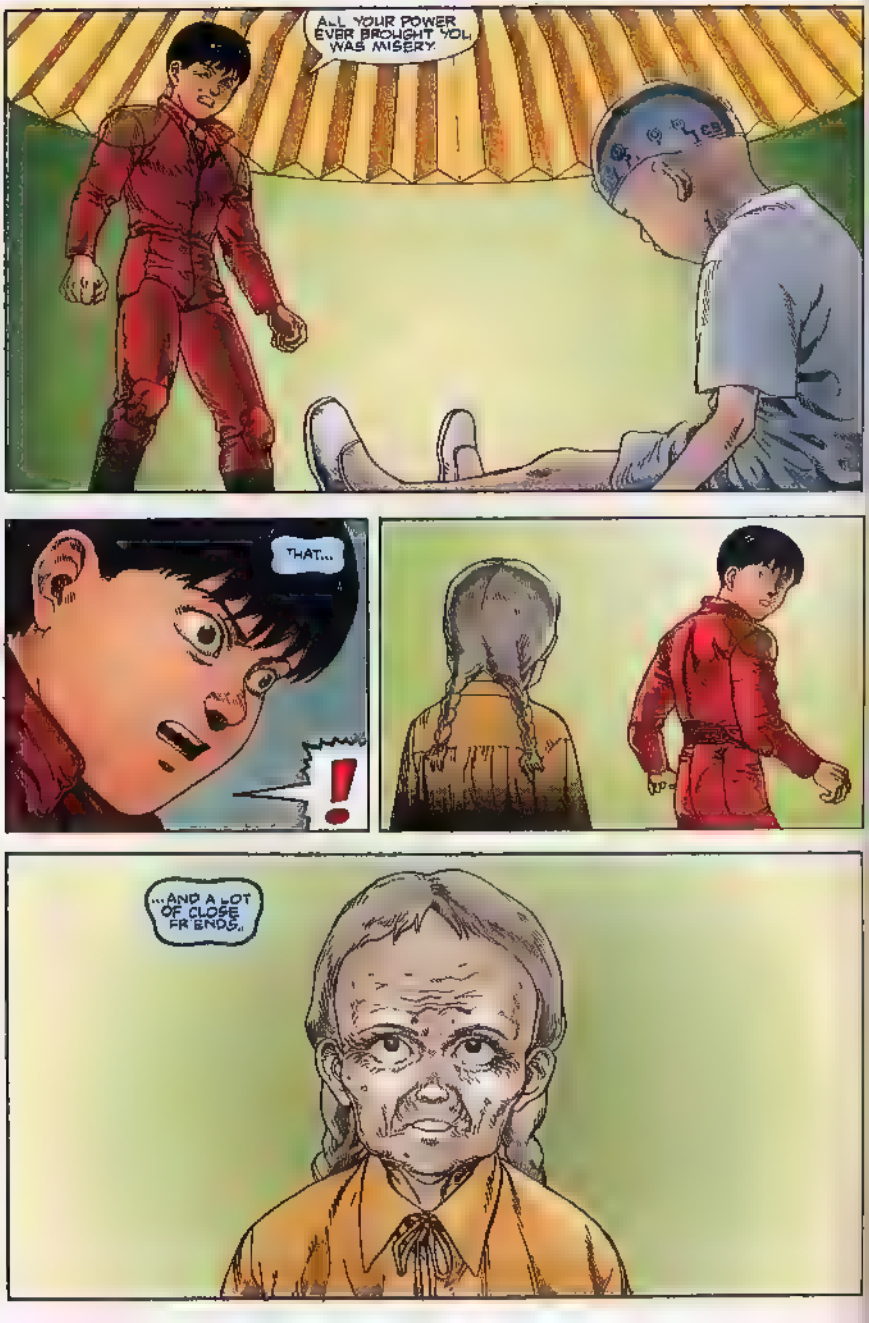
THIS IS THE FIRST ROOM IN WHICH THEY HOUSED THE CHILDREN WHO SHOWED THE SIGNS...
AKIRA--?!
HUNH?
AND THEN THE EXPERIMENT BEGAN.


HR-3

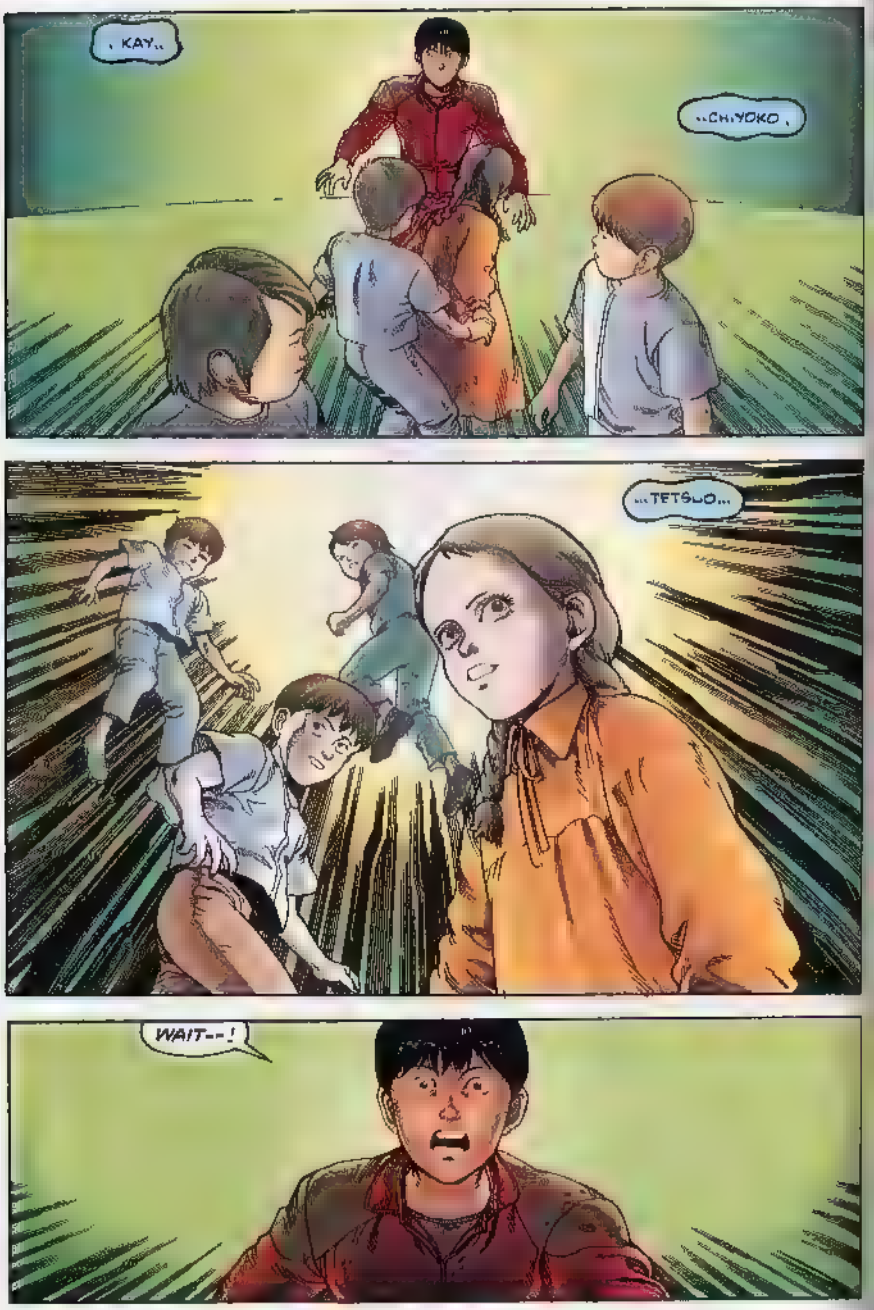

"THE FATE OF THE MAJORITY WAS MADNESS OR DEATH.

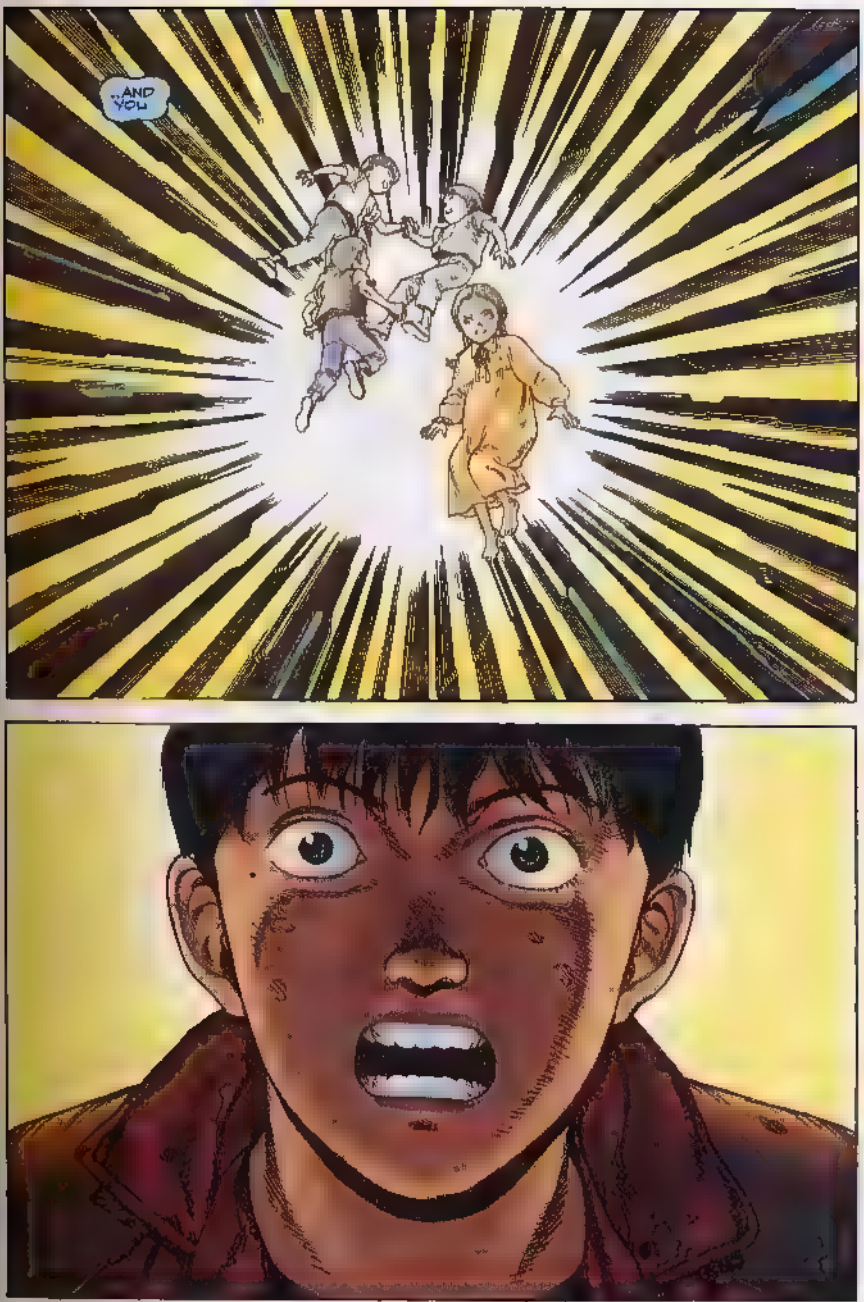
"...AND MANY IN WHOM THE POWER AWOKE.

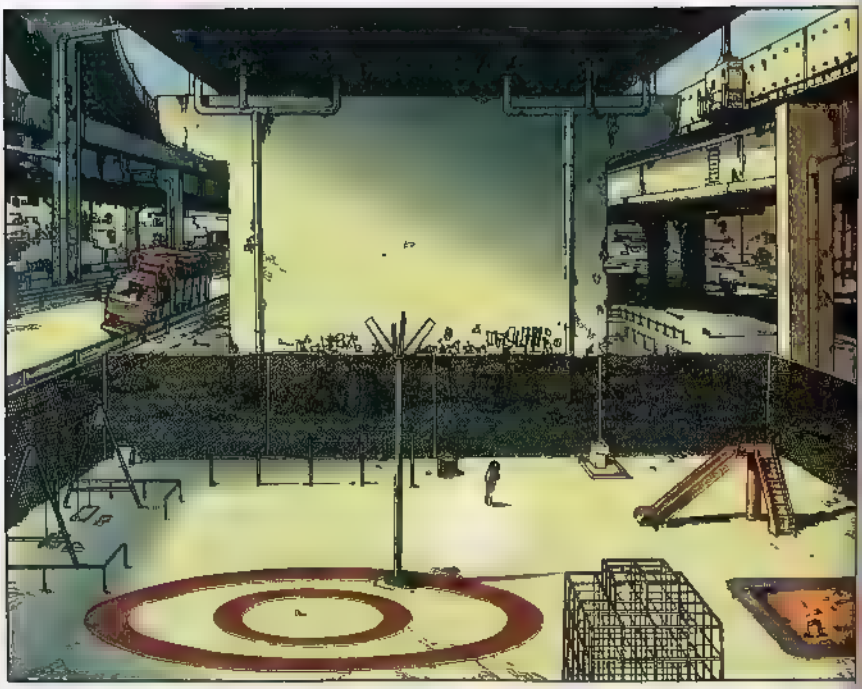

"...WERE LEFT WITH CRIPPLING HANDICAPS


ALL YOUR POWER EVER BROUGHT YOU WAS MISERY.
THAT...
!
...AND A LOT OF CLOSE FRIENDS.

...WHO CAN COMMUNICATE WITHOUT WORDS...
...SPEAKING TO EACH OTHER'S SPIRITS.
JUST WHO ARE YOUR FRIENDS?
MIYAKO AND THE PEOPLE FROM HER TEMPLE...


, KAY..
..CHIYOKO ,
...TETSUO...
WAIT--!


..AND YOU

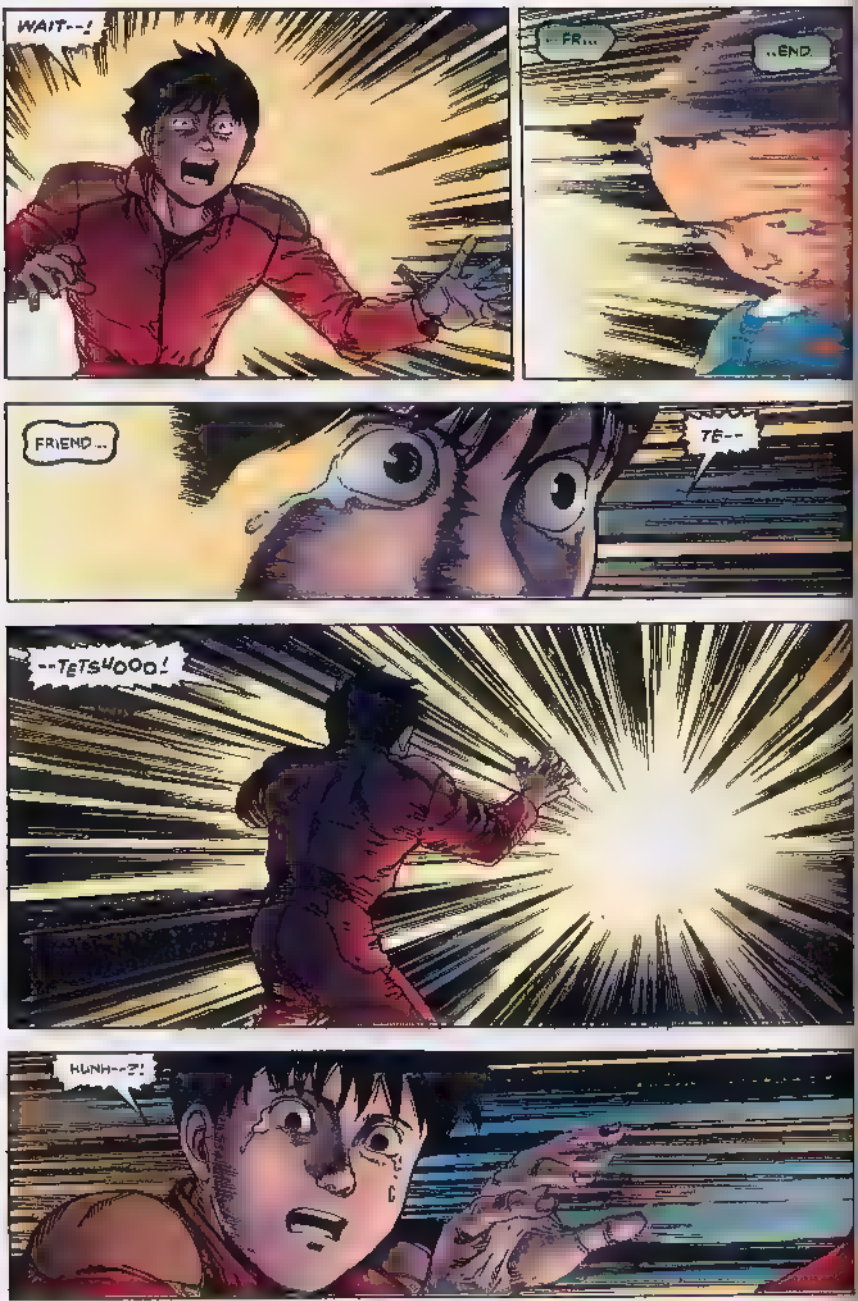


THIS PLAYGROUND LOOKS LIKE .

!
GUYS FROM THE PROJECTS...
...ALWAYS GANG UP ON NEWCOMERS
THAT'S THE WAY THEY ARE
IT HAPPENED TO ME WHEN I FIRST MOVED HERE
HEY!
WAIT UP.

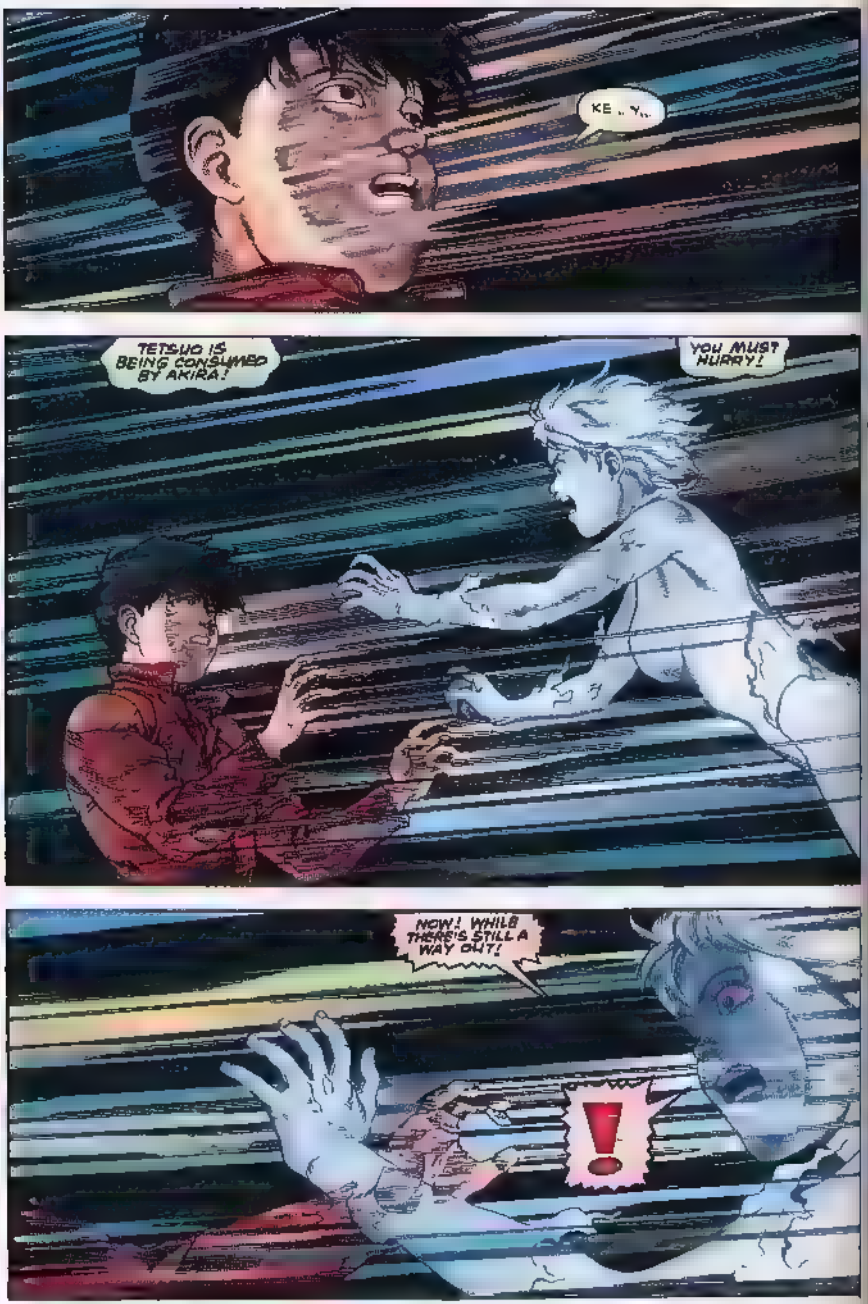
YOU TOOK IT THE WRONG WAY, TETSUO...
BACK THEN...
...ALL I WANTED WAS TO BE YOUR FRIEND.
MY FRIEND..?

MY NAME..
...IS TETSUO.
TETSUO SHIMA.
GASP!
MY
NEW
BRAND


WAIT--!
..FR...
..END.
FRIEND..
7E--
--TETS4000!
HUNH--?!

KA...
.....
KA...
KA...NEDA...
KA...
NE...
KANEDA!
KAY!

WWWSHHHHKKSHHH
KRASH


KE...Y...
TETSUO IS BEING CONSUMED BY AKIRA!
YOU MUST HURRY!
NOW! WHILE THERE'S STILL A WAY OUT!
!

W-WAIT!
YAA--!
KIIIIN
AAUGH--!
KA-
--KANEDAAA!
KAY!!

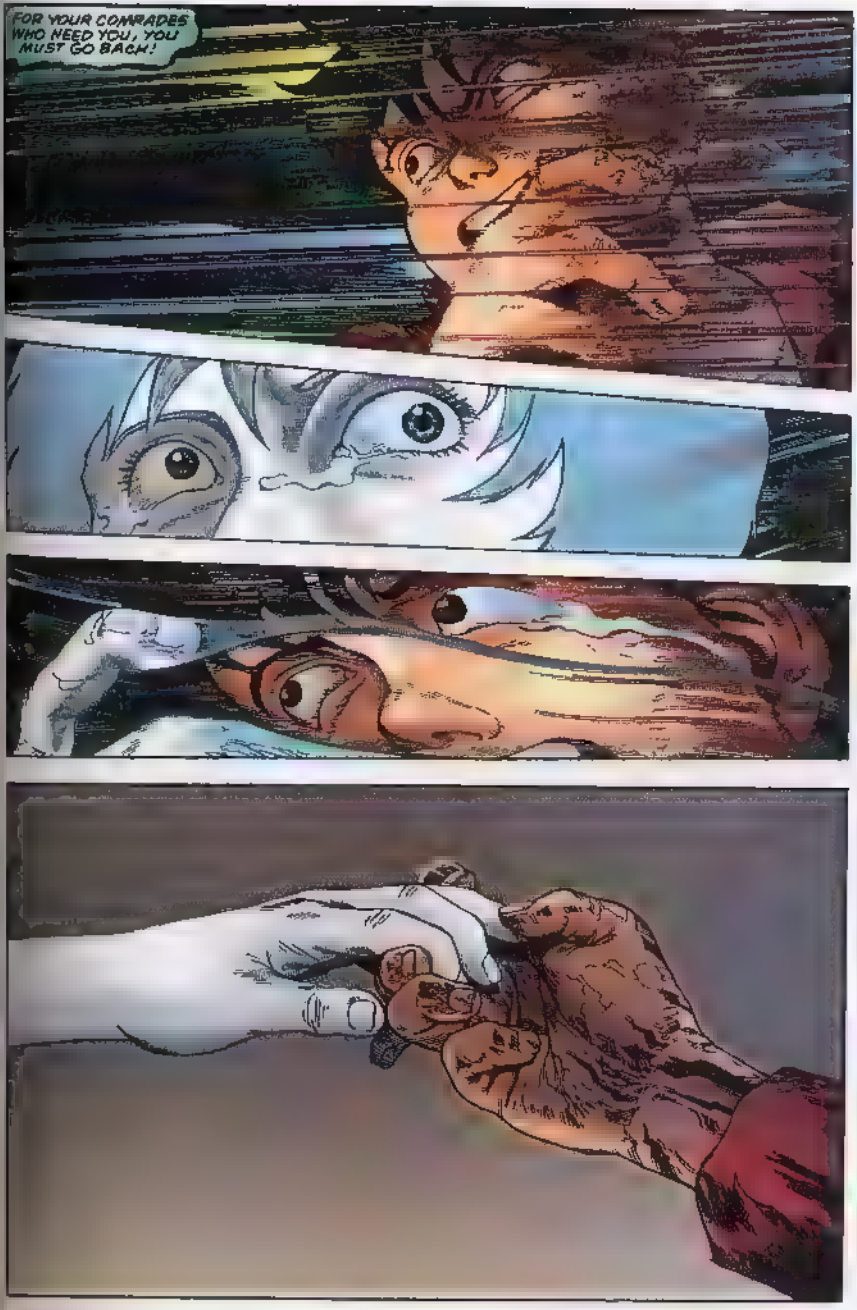
KAY..
HANG ON KANEDA
DON'T LET THE ILLUSIONS DOMINATE YOU

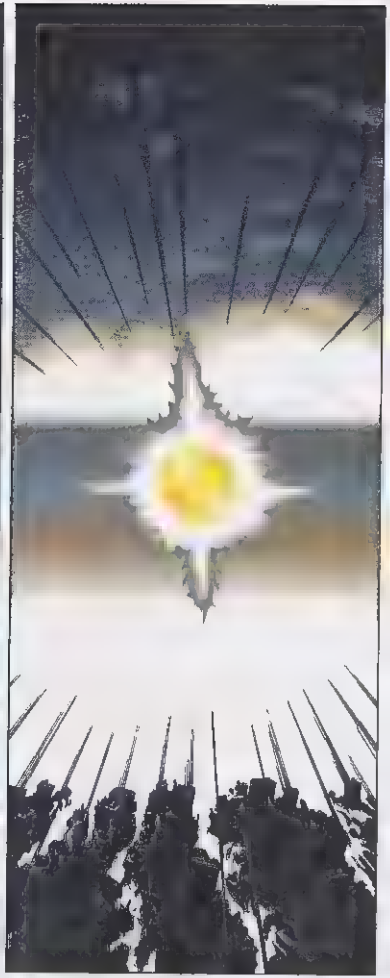
FOCUS YOUR MIND, OR AKIRA WILL CONSUME YOU!

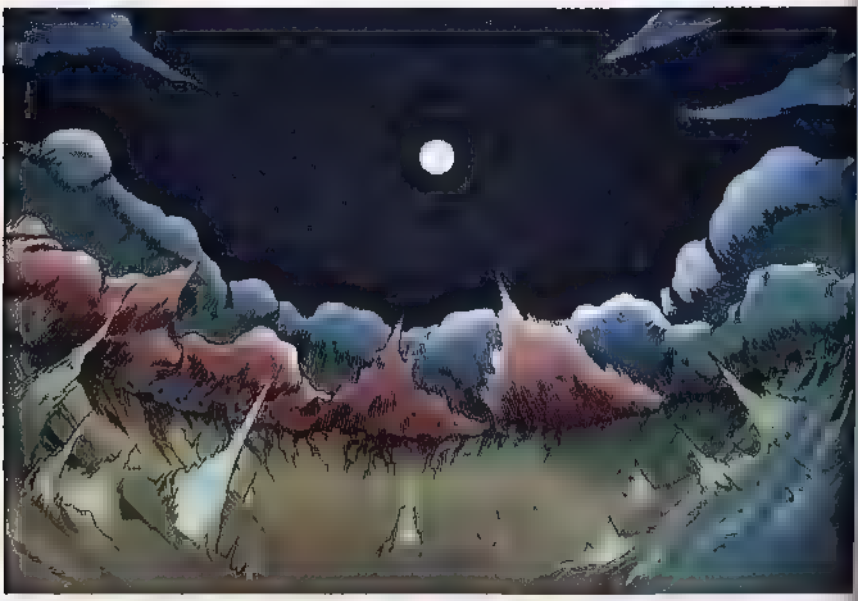
TETSUO...
ARE YOU THERE?
HEY!
HEY, TETSUO WHERE ARE YOU?

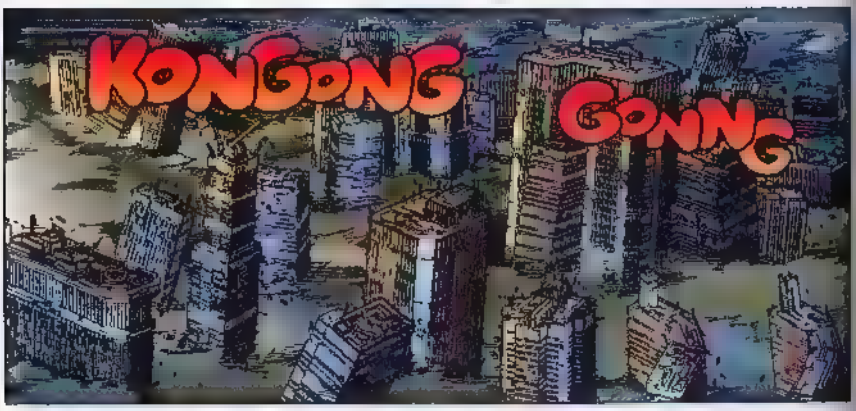
HE WAS SUPPOSED TO MEET ME HERE.
TETSUO HAS GONE ON.
HUNH?
YOU MUST LEAVE AS WELL.

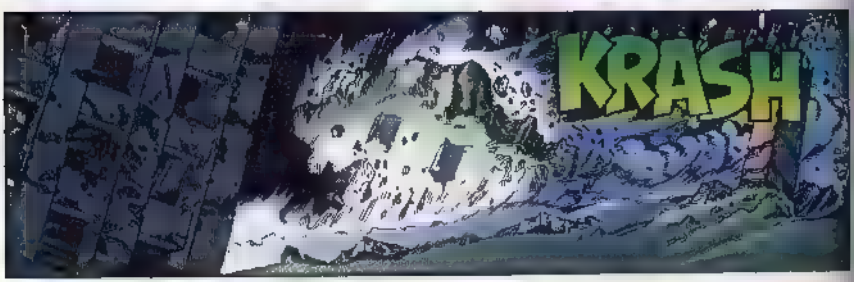
YAAUGH!
KAAA..
!
KA..
NE..
. OAAAA
KAAAY!!

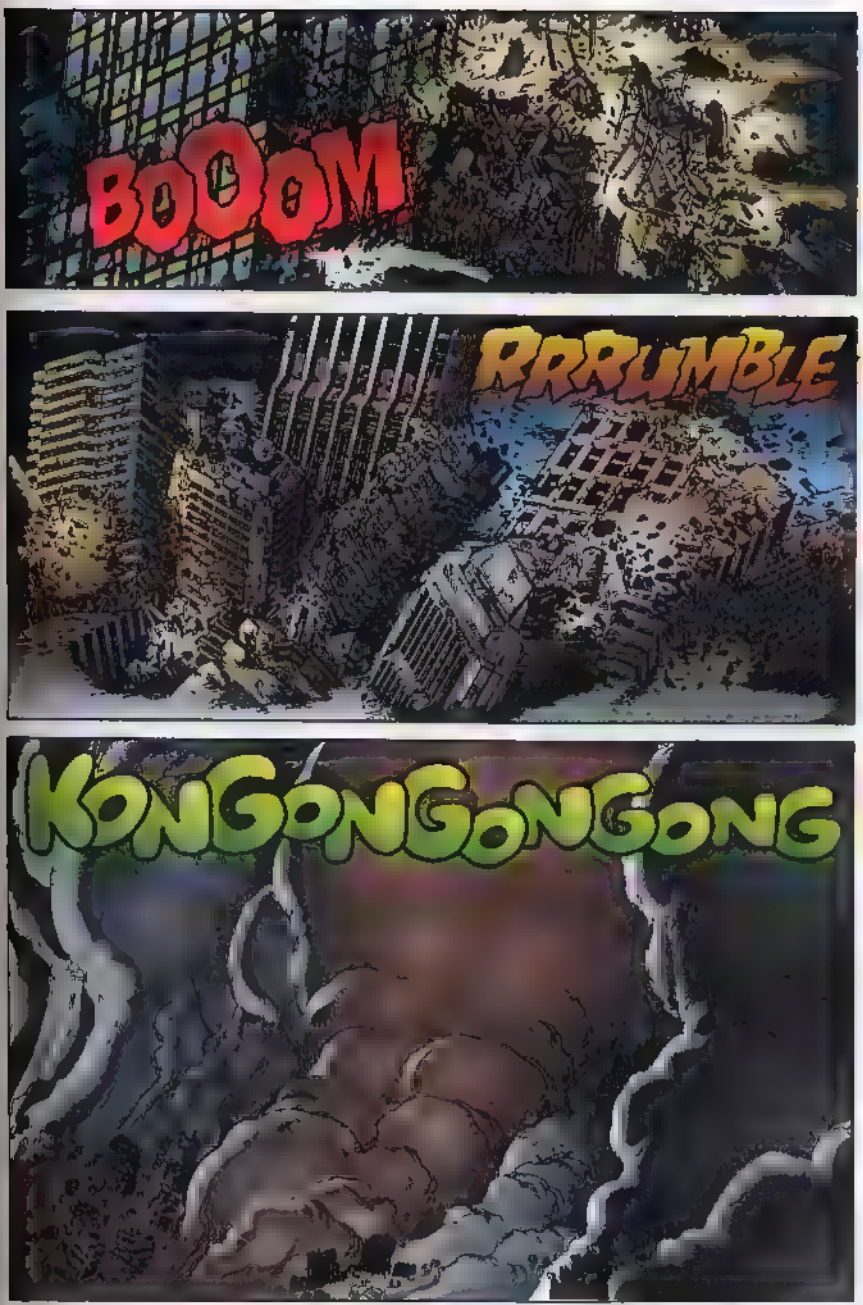

FOR YOUR COMRADES WHO NEED YOU, YOU MUST GO BACK!

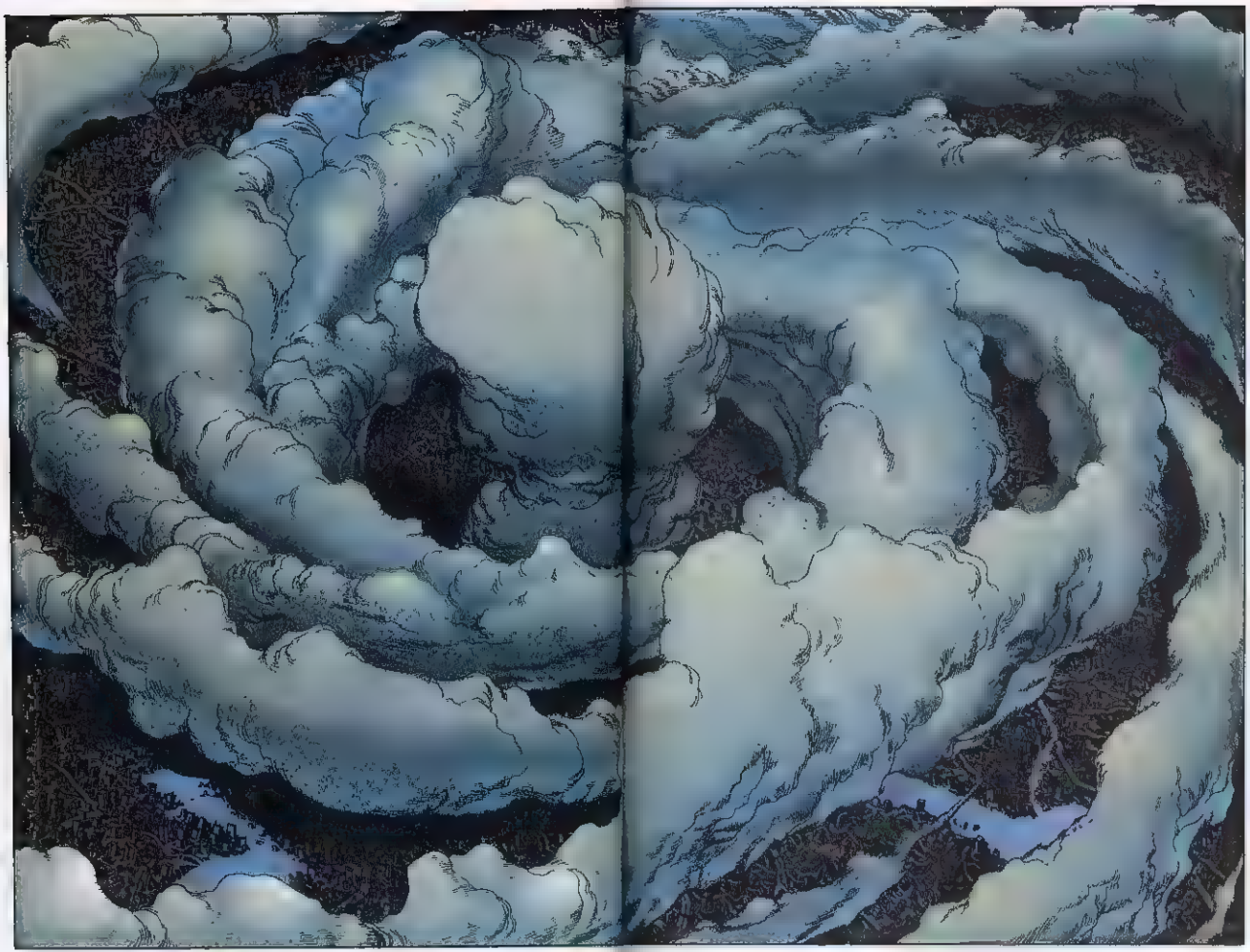


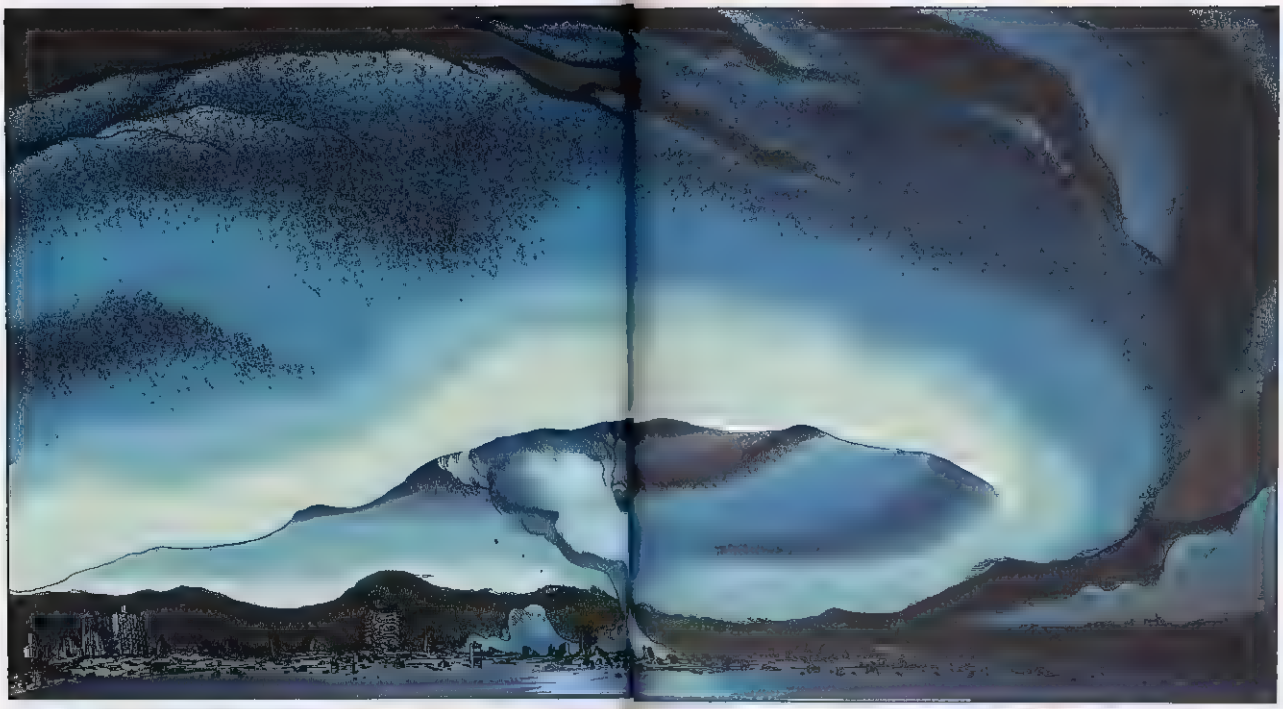


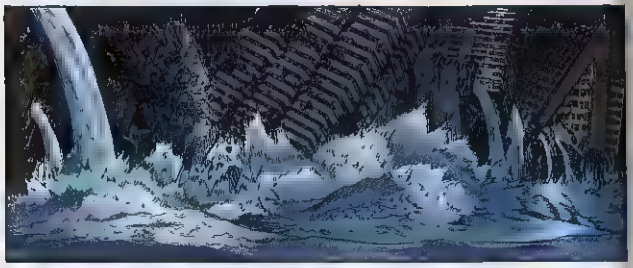

KONGONG
GONNG

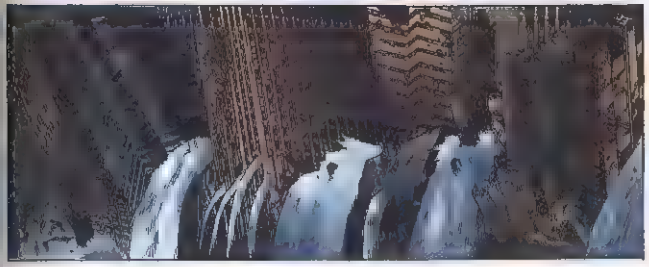

KRASH

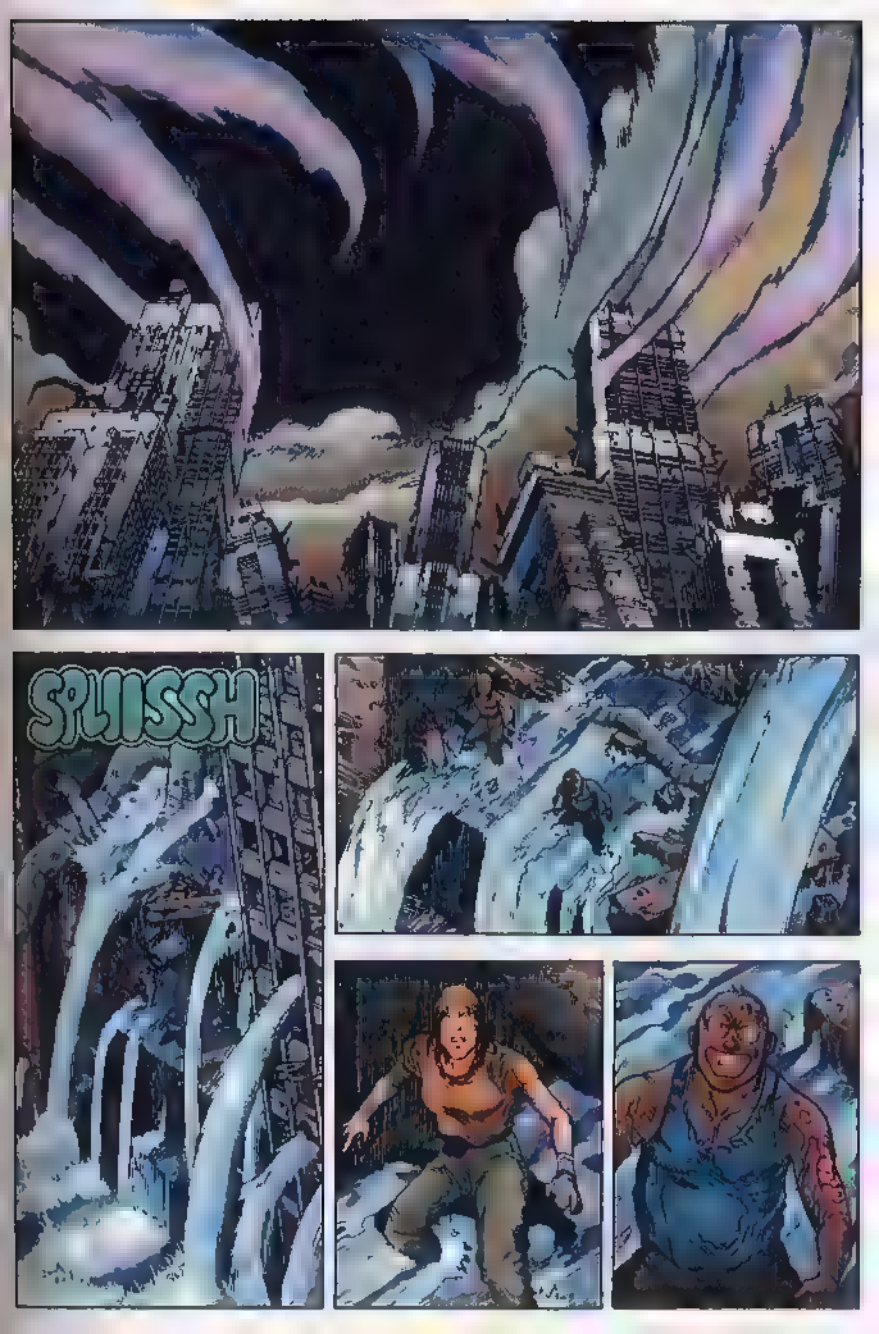

BOOOM
RRRUMBLE
KONGONGONGONG

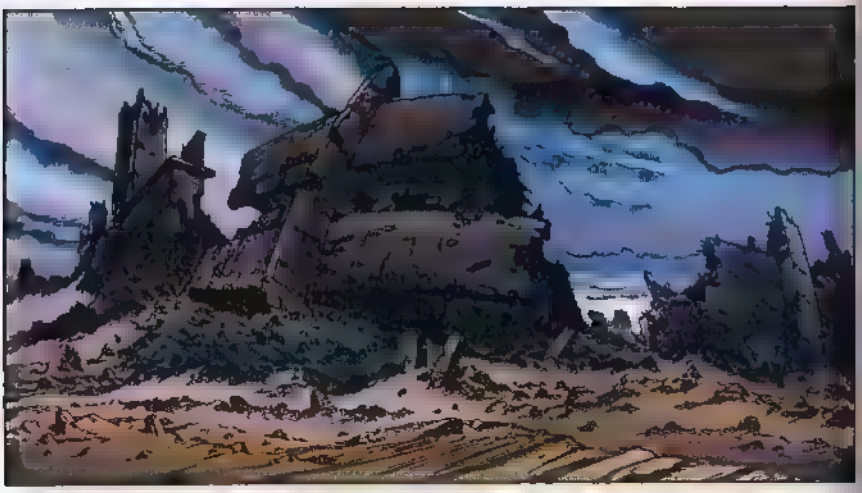


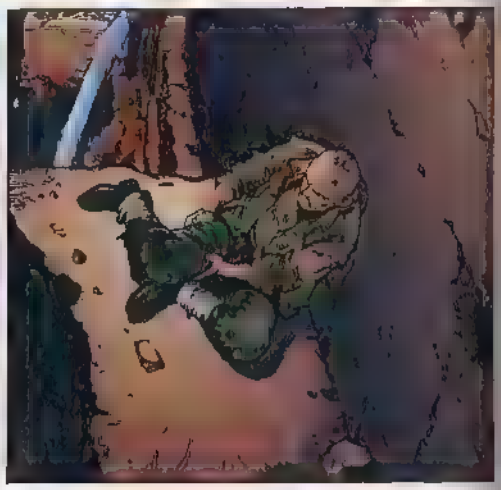


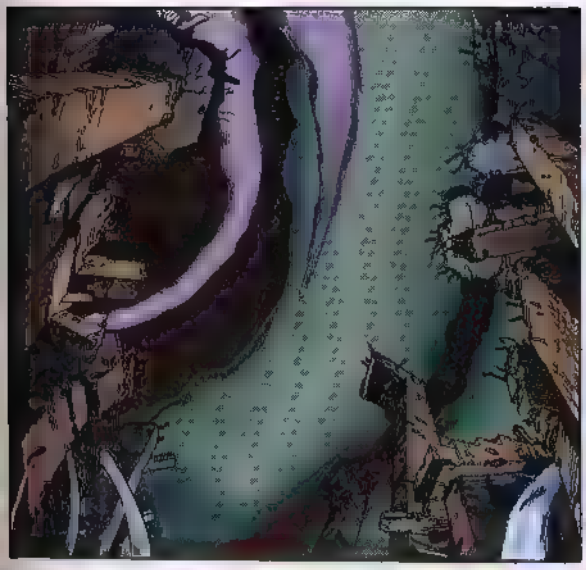




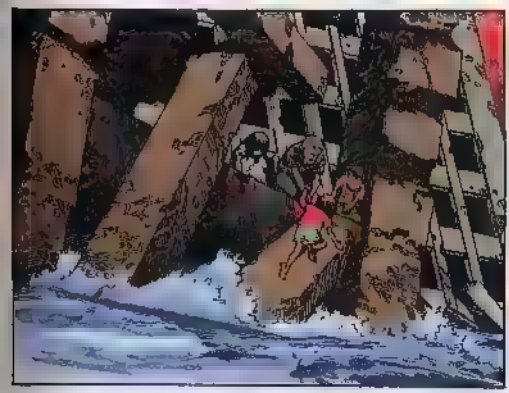

SPLISSH

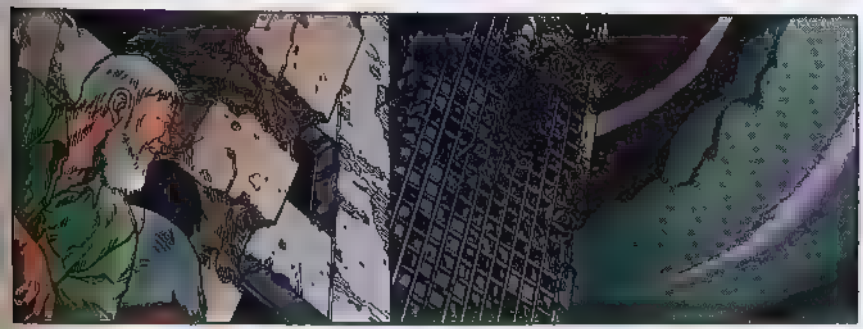




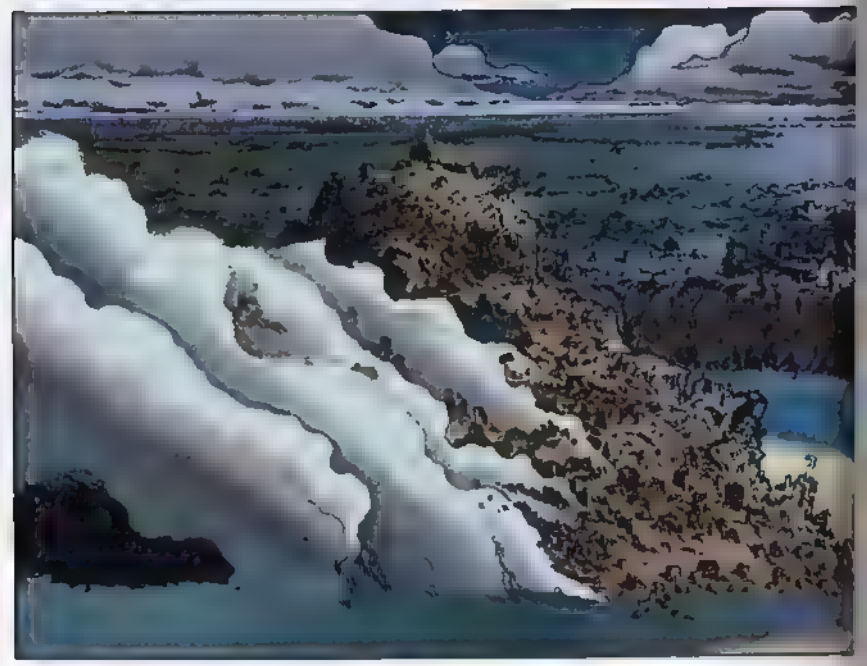


SPLASH

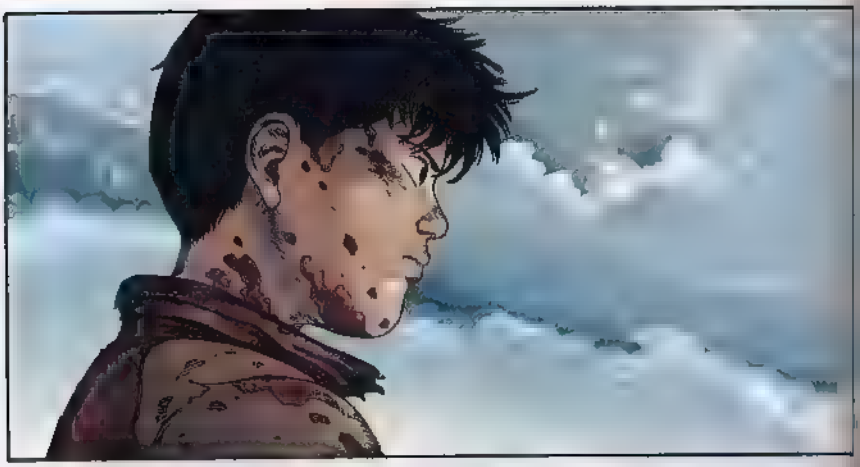




SLUK
KANEDAA?!
HEYYYY--!



KLATTER



THEY'RE GONE. EVERYONE.

!

LOOK!
HUNH?

NEXT ISSUE: **THE FINAL CHAPTER**

AKIRA
TRIBUTES

FEATURING WORKS BY:

MARK TEXEIRA

JOE DUFFY

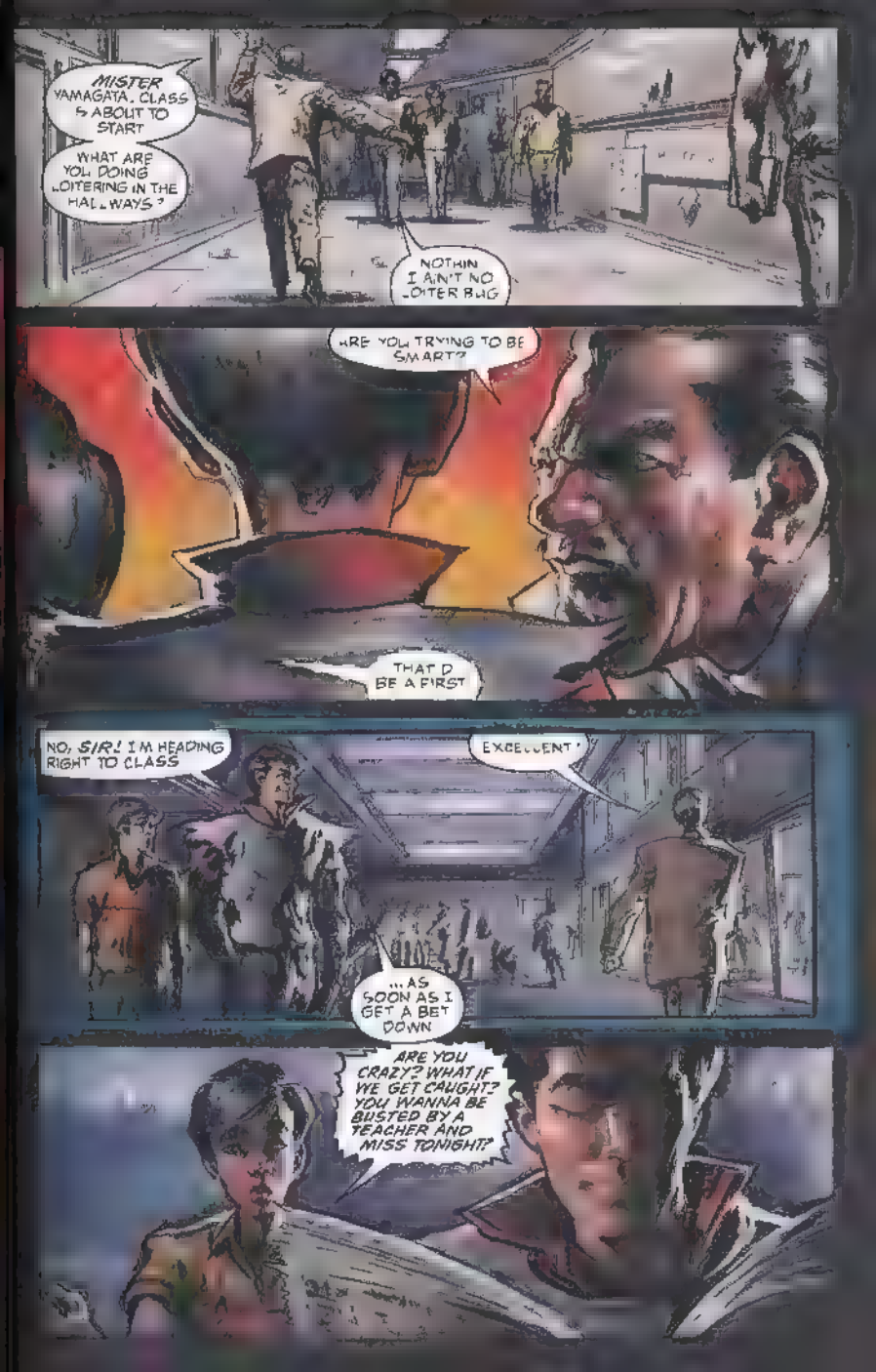
KENT WILLIAMS

YAMAGATA!
FINAL BETS
JO DUFFY
WRITER
MARK TEXEIRA
ARTIST

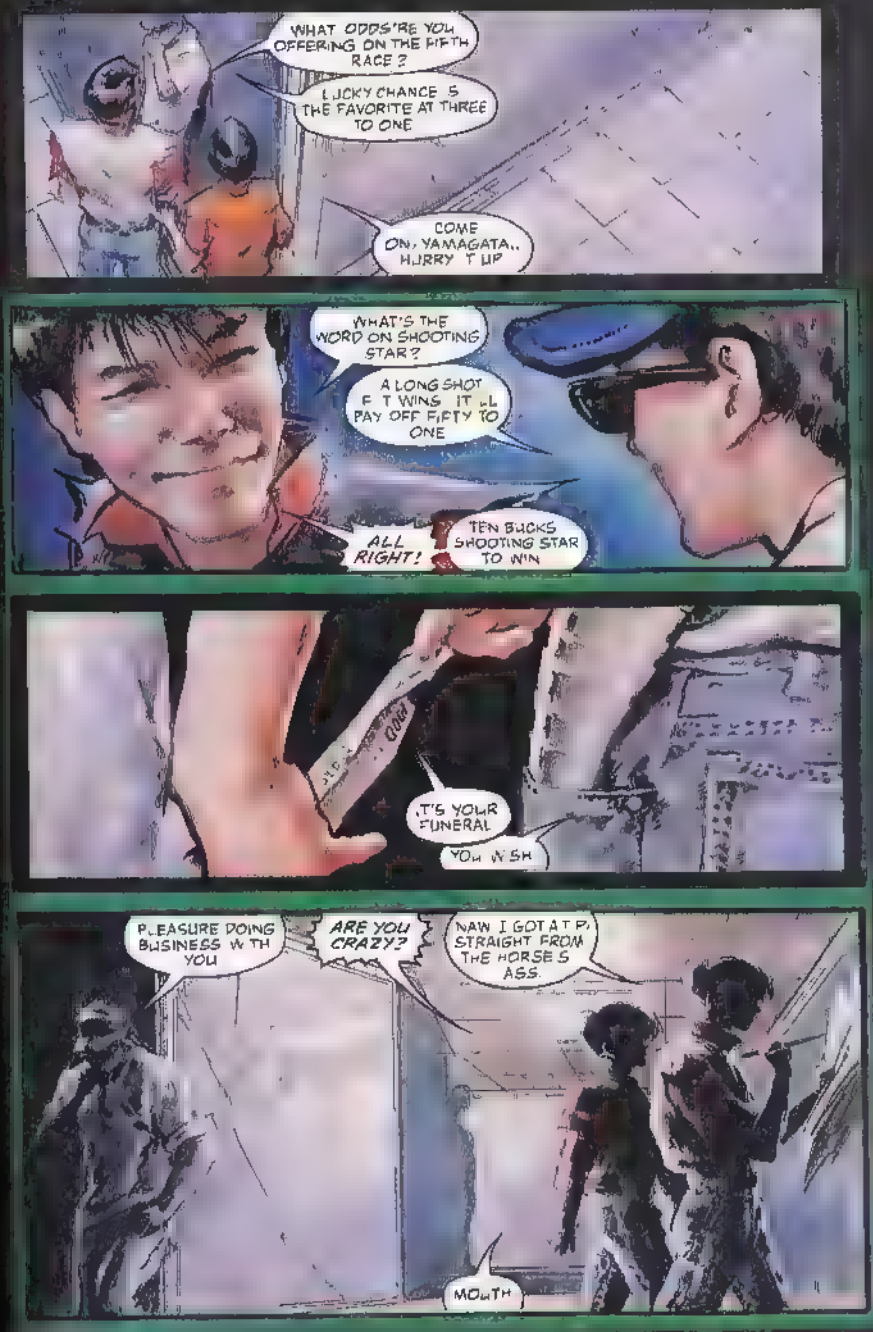
YAMAGATA...?
HEY, YAMAGATA!
WHAT'S UP, KAI?
WHAT RE YOU DOING? IT S LIKE YOU RE IN ANOTHER WORLD
STUDYNG THE RACING FORM TRYIN T FIGURE WHO LOOKS GOOD IN THE F FTH?
CAN T IT WAT IF WE AREN T IN CLASS BEFORE THE LAST BELL WE RE GONNA GET NA LED

I'M SURPRISED YOU'RE EVEN THINKING ABOUT STUFF LIKE THAT CONSIDERING WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST
HEY, I'M A MAN OF THE WORLD. I'VE GOT MY PRIORITIES
TONIGHT'S FIGHT'LL GET MY TOTAL ATTENTION TONIGHT, BUT FOR NOW I'M CONCERNED WITH THE SOD...
...I MEAN THE TURDS
YOU MEAN THE TURF
KAI YAMAGATA. WHAT'S THE WORD?
YEAH WHAT YOU SAID
I WANT THIRTY BUCKS WORTH
HEY WHAT ARE YOU TRYIN' TO PULL? MY MONEY SHOULD BUY MORE THAN THAT.
SUPPLY AND DEMAND THESE DAYS TETSUO WANTS ALL THE DRUGS HE CAN GET. AND WHEN A GUY WHO CAN EXPLODE YOUR HEAD JUST BY LOOKIN AT IT ASKS YOU FOR SOMETHING..
YOU LET HIM HAVE IT.

HOW MANY GANGS ARE LINED UP FOR TONIGHT?
ALL OF THEM. EVERY BIKER IN NEO TOKYO AGAINST THAT ADDICT, TETSUO, AND HIS GANG OF CLOWNS
AND KANEDA'S OUR LEADER SO WE'RE GONNA KICK THEIR BUTTS.
YEAH!
WE'LL MEET BEFORE HAND AT HARUKIYA COME READY TO RUMBLE
COME READY TO FIGHT


MISTER YAMAGATA. CLASS IS ABOUT TO START
WHAT ARE YOU DOING LOITERING IN THE HALLWAYS?
NOTHIN I AIN'T NO LOITER BUG
ARE YOU TRYING TO BE SMART?
THAT'D BE A FIRST
NO, SIR! I'M HEADING RIGHT TO CLASS
EXCELLENT
...AS SOON AS I GET A BET DOWN
ARE YOU CRAZY? WHAT IF WE GET CAUGHT? YOU WANNA BE BUSTED BY A TEACHER AND MISS TONIGHT?

NOTHING LL MAKE ME MISS THAT TETSUO BETRAYED HIS FR ENDS. TURN NG INTO SOME K ND OF MUTANT AND BLOWING EVERY-ONE UP
AN I WON T STAND FOR IT ! KANEDA S COUNTING ON US
AHA.
WHATEVER THOSE LOW-L FES ARE UP TO THEY WON T GET AWAY WITH T WH LE I'M AROUND
YAMAGATA
JOHJ
JAWS.
JAWS!
T S MR TAKABA!
THE GYM TEACHER FROM HELL!


WHAT ODDS'RE YOU OFFERING ON THE FIFTH RACE?
LUCKY CHANCE 5 THE FAVORITE AT THREE TO ONE
COME ON, YAMAGATA.. HURRY T UP
WHAT'S THE WORD ON SHOOTING STAR?
A LONG SHOT E T WINS IT LL PAY OFF FIFTY TO ONE
ALL RIGHT!
TEN BUCKS SHOOTING STAR TO WIN
IT'S YOUR FUNERAL
YOU WISH
PLEASURE DOING BUSINESS W TH YOU
ARE YOU CRAZY?
NAW I GOT A T P STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE S ASS.
MOUTH

HORSES DON'T TALK
WITH EVIDENCE HE'S BEEN GAMBLING RIGHT IN HIS HANDS. HE CAN'T WIGGLE OUT OF IT
THIS IS GOING TO BE SWEET
TRUST ME. I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING.
THROWING AWAY TEN DOLLARS!
I'M NOT GOING TO LOSE

POP
KAI!
SMASH
BAP
IS IT TRUE KANEDA'S TURNED UP?
YEP HE'S GONNA LEAD US AGAINST THE CLOWNS
BUT... HE WAS TETSUO'S BEST FRIEND
THAT WAS BEFORE
WHO NEEDS A FRIEND WHO DOES ALL THOSE DRUGS HANGS WITH THE CLOWNS...
AND KILLS ALMOST EVERYONE HE MEETS.?

YOU HAVE A DEFINITE POINT THERE.
GOOD LUCK TONIGHT I WISH I COULD COME AND HELP YOU
BUT I'M A COWARD.
THE RACING PAGES?
WHO DO YOU LIKE FOR TODAY?
NOW!
NO...

YAAUGH-!
KRASSH

SHOOTING STAR'S GONNA PAY OFF BIG!
I COULD FEEL IT FROM THE MINUTE I GOT OUT OF BED.
NEO TOKYO
TODAY'S MY LUCKY DAY
TE...TETSUO... YOU MOTHER.
YA--!
YOU'RE GONNA DIIII!!!--
AIEEEEE!

SPLUTCH
YAMAGATAAA!!!
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
NEO TOKYO SPORTS
SHOOTING STAR WINS FIFTH RACE, PAYS
OFF TITTY TO ONE...
THE FAIR

DAVE
GIBBONS
1993

KATSUHIRO OTOMO
writer • illustrator

SATOSHI TAKABATAKE
[illegible] to Mr. Otomo

SATOSHI KON
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[illegible]

OLYOPTICS COMPUTER CREW
[illegible]

MICHAEL HIGGINS
with LAURA BRADY
[illegible]

KEVIN SOMERS
POLLY WATSON
[illegible]

MARIE JAVINS
[illegible]

CARL POTTS
[illegible]

There are secrets deep w th n the human soul that are at once div nely wonderfu and insane y terr fying Jou rney with Kaneda a young b ker turned-warrior, as he plumbs the depths of mystery in Neo Tokyo Young children are codd ed and nurtured before being fed to experiments that w open the r m nds to the power of the cosmos A young boy named Tetsuo stands a one on an nner city playground, searching for a fr end, wary of dangerous gangs lurk ng in the shadows F erce energies tear at the fabric of rea ity to reveal the wondrous next step n man s evolution

KATSUHIRO OTOMO S

AKIRA

DIRECT EDITION

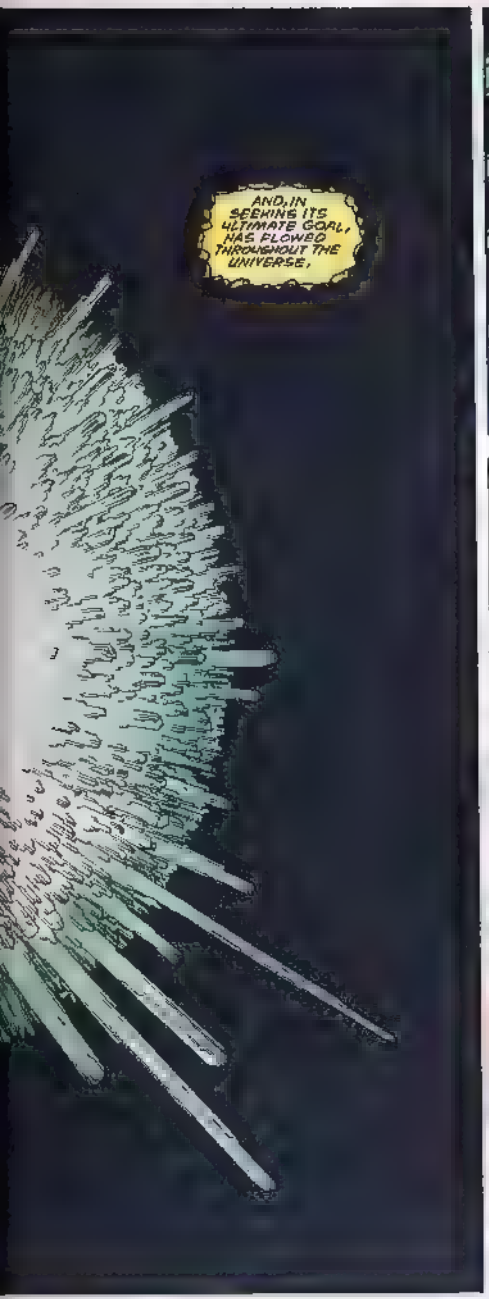
This scan produced by:

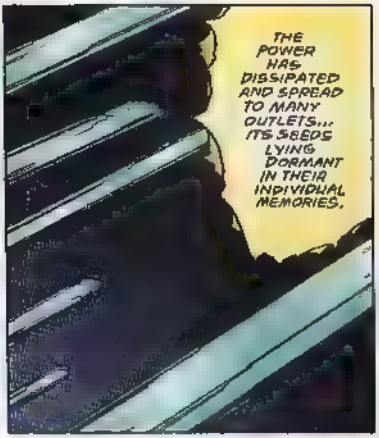
I love um

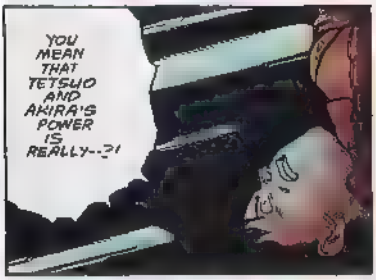
I buy um

I preserve um

ONE VAST FORCE WAS RELEASED...


AND, IN SEEKING ITS ULTIMATE GOAL, HAS FLOWED THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE.


THE POWER HAS DISSIPATED AND SPREAD TO MANY OUTLETS... ITS SEEDS LYING DORMANT IN THEIR INDIVIDUAL MEMORIES.

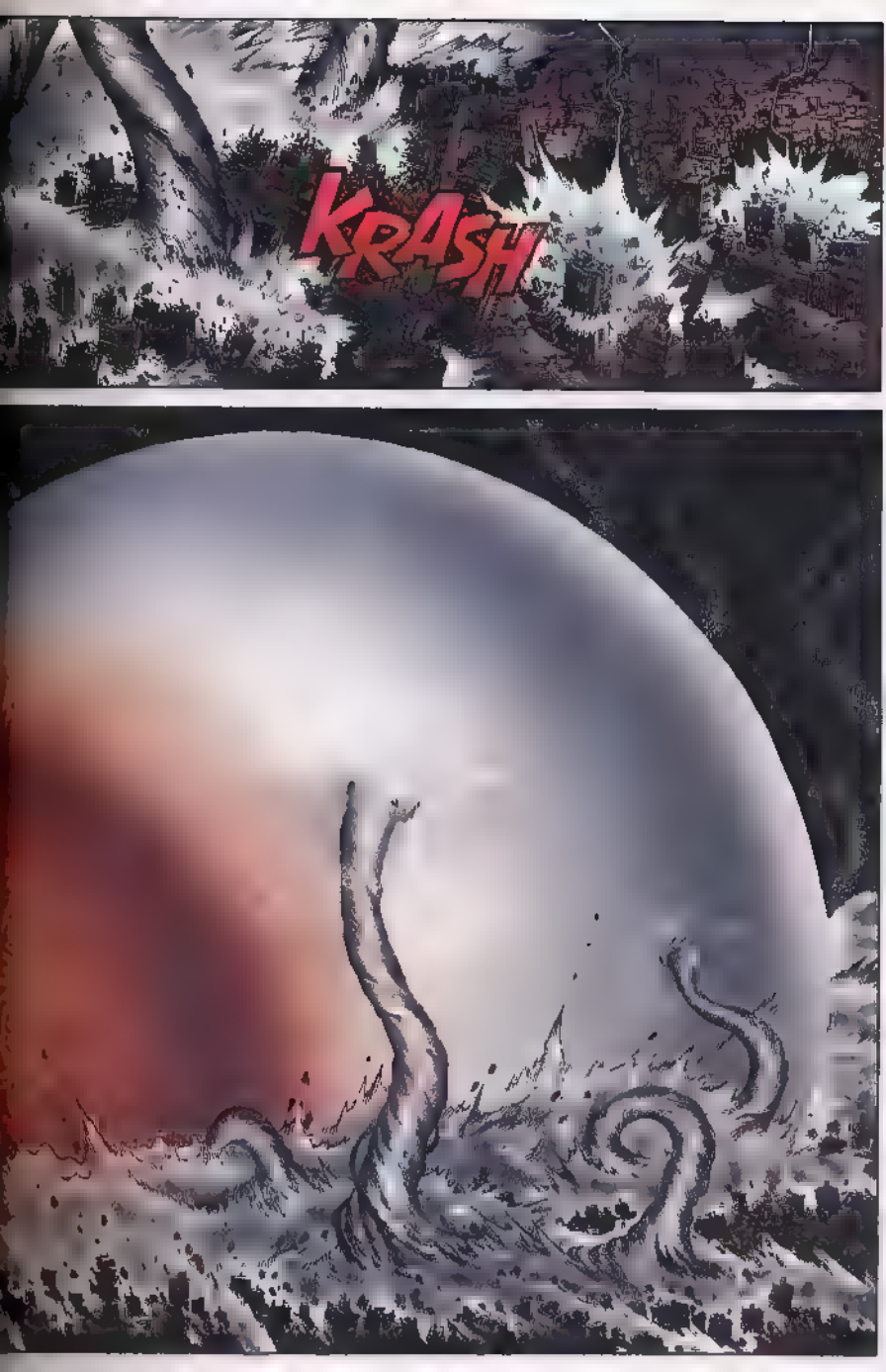

YOU MEAN THAT TETSUO AND AKIRA'S POWER IS, REALLY--?!

BUT THEN WHY'S IT ALWAYS SO DESTRUC-TIVE?

THE HARDSHIPS AKIRA GENERATED MAY BE MEANT TO PROMOTE HUMANITY'S EVOLUTION...
YOU MEAN THE HUMAN RACE WANTS TO EVOLVE INTO SOMETHING DIFFERENT?
THE FRUITS BEING DOWN HERE.

WHAT THE HELL FOR?!
EVEN EVOLUTION IS A PROGRAMMED FLOW, ISN'T IT?!
CAN YOU DOUBT THE ABILITY OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT TO CHOOSE THE PATH OUR DEVELOPMENT WILL FOLLOW?
...WILL BE HARVESTED BY YOUR CHILDREN.
THAT IS TOTAL BULLSHIT! YOU CAN'T TELL ME THAT TETSUO AND THOSE SHRIVELLED WHITE MUTANT KIDS FROM THE LAB ARE SOMETHING THE HUMAN RACE WANTS TO BE!

WWWSHHHHKKSHHH


KRASH